

DAILY BULLETIN

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U.S. ENVOY BOLTON PLEDGES INCREASED PUSH FOR U.N. REFORMS

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Washington – U.S. Ambassador John Bolton says there will be an increased U.S. effort in the coming weeks and months for needed reforms at the United Nations.

Bolton told an audience in London on June 8 that the United States is pursuing a reform agenda motivated by the need for “a stronger United Nations” that is better able to solve existing international problems.

The U.S. representative to the United Nations told the Centre for Policy Studies that the issue is whether it is possible for the United Nations to perform as its founders intended. “Can it solve problems like Iran’s pursuit of nuclear weapons, the humanitarian tragedy of Darfur, and the critical efforts to make Lebanon a free and independent country again?” he asked. U.N. reform will be judged against the answers to these questions, Bolton said.

LEBANON

Bolton said that an important priority is finishing the job of disentangling Syria from Lebanon. The United States expects Syria to cooperate with the international investigation into the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, he said, as well as the assassinations of another 14 anti-Syrian Lebanese politicians.

However, he said, "The Syrian government has not cooperated with that investigation," and Syrian government officials continue obstructing the inquiry. Should that pattern continue, Bolton said, it will test the U.N. Security Council's resolve to back up the investigation. The claim by Syrian officials that they have no documents on Hariri is not credible, given his past alignment with Syrian military and security forces, Bolton said.

The United States is prepared to see the investigation continue for as long as the investigators deem necessary, he said. Bolton praised the work of the independent probe as "excellent and thorough," although the Syrians continue to block full access to the evidence needed by the investigators.

PEACEKEEPING IN DARFUR

Another priority Bolton identified is the effort to transform the African Union's peacekeeping force in Sudan's Darfur region to a U.N. peacekeeping operation. "We place priority on bringing stability back to Darfur," he said, so that hundreds of thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons can return. Doing so will be a major task for the Security Council and the U.N. collectively, he said.

IRAN'S POLITICAL CHOICE

Bolton also commented on the United States' offer to talk directly with Iran if the Tehran regime agrees to suspend its uranium enrichment activities. The spotlight is now on Iran and Iranian government officials have a stark choice to make, he said.

If Iranian enrichment activities verifiably are suspended, Bolton said, Iran can forge a new and different relationship with Europe and the United States. If that does not happen, he said, political, diplomatic, and economic pressure will be increased and Iran will "become increasingly isolated internationally."

U.S. SUPPORTS JAPAN FOR SECURITY COUNCIL EXPANSION

During the question-and-answer session, Bolton was asked about the future composition of the Security Council. He said that although the United States supports the inclusion of Japan as a permanent member and there is much interest in expanding the council, it is unlikely there will be any changes anytime soon due to political jockeying.

The emphasis, he said, needs to remain, instead, on management reform, accountability and mandate review. For more information about U.S. policy, see United States and U.N. Reform: http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international_security/UNGA_2005.html

IMPERFECT HIV VACCINE NONETHELESS HELPS SURVIVAL, RESEARCH SHOWS

Vaccine trial in monkeys offers increased survival but not protection from virus

Washington – HIV/AIDS researchers have developed a vaccine that helps prolong survival in monkeys after infection even though it does not create immunity from the virus, according to research published in the journal Science June 9.

Finding a vaccine against HIV has become the most difficult scientific problem in the 25-year history of the epidemic, experts say. Medical science is able to make a vaccine work by finding a way properly to trigger the immune system to mount a response to an invader. But HIV is a virus that so successfully disables the human immune system, researchers are thwarted in their work.

This new research found that monkeys vaccinated against simian immunodeficiency virus (SIV) survived longer after deliberate SIV infection than animals not vaccinated. SIV is a close relative of the HIV virus that plagues almost 40 million people around the world and causes an animal disease similar to that found in humans.

Two teams of researchers set out to test the theory that an imperfect HIV vaccine still might allow infected individuals to live longer and healthier lives, even while it failed to give them immunity.

Dr. Normal Levin led a team from Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center at Harvard Medical School and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID)'s Vaccine Research Center (VRC). Mario Roderer of the VRC led a second team.

Watching the behavior of a special subset of immune cells after a vaccinated monkey is infected was key to determining whether a survival advantage could be gained from an imperfect vaccine, according to a June

9 NIAID press release. These special cells are known as memory CD4+ T cells and are critical to the immune system's ability to muster an immune response.

Normally, a rapid, significant loss of these memory CD4+ T cells occurs very early, only about 10 days into an SIV infection, when levels of virus in the bloodstream are at their peak. Up to 80 percent of memory CD4+ T cells in some tissues become infected and are lost, significantly damaging the immune system. In this research, the vaccinated monkeys had a significantly different reaction after infection. Three times to five times fewer memory cells in the vaccinated group were infected and destroyed.

"If the virus wipes out only a fraction of the memory CD4+ T cells that it might otherwise destroy, that should allow [the animals] to live longer," said NIAID's Roederer. The research teams found that the levels of CD4+ T cells remained at significantly higher levels in the vaccinated animals for the 850 days they were studied. "Although our ultimate goal is to have a vaccine that completely blocks HIV infection," said NIAID Director Anthony S. Fauci, "this research suggests a potential benefit of even a partially effective vaccine."

The SIV vaccine used in this research was a simplified version of a preventive HIV vaccine developed by VRC scientists and currently is undergoing human trials for efficacy in the United States, the Caribbean and sub-Saharan Africa.

Large-scale human clinical trials are likely to begin sometime in 2007.

U.S. PLANS "SIGNIFICANT" CONTRIBUTION TO NEW BLACK SEA FUND

Public-private grant-making trust will promote democracy, regional cooperation

By Vince Crawley
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The United States plans to make a substantial contribution to the Black Sea Trust, a new multi-million-dollar fund promoting democracy and cooperation among nine countries in southeast Europe, President Bush's deputy national security adviser says.

The trust will provide grants to focus on enhancing economic and security cooperation, crisis management and democracy in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine.

In remarks at the Black Sea Forum June 5 in Bucharest, Romania, Deputy National Security Advisor J. D. Crouch said the United States would participate in and make a significant financial contribution to the trust in partnership with the German Marshall Fund, the Romanian government and other donors.

Crouch said the United States is supporting other initiatives such as the Black Sea Economic Cooperation initiative and the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative. "We want to hear your ideas on how to cooperate more effectively to address a broader range of issues," Crouch added.

"For centuries, these lands have been a cultural crossroads -- connecting Europe to the Middle East and Central Asia," Crouch said. The flow of communication through the region was stifled during the Cold War, he added, "but today your nations have a new opportunity to build stronger links with each other -- and thereby reclaim your historic position as a region of connections between East and West."

The German Marshall Fund (GMF) of the United States announced the creation of the trust on June 5 during the Black Sea Forum in Bucharest, Romania. The GMF said it anticipates launching operations of the Black Sea Trust in the fall, with initial contributions of more than \$20 million, climbing to more than \$40 million as the trust matures. Contributors include the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Romanian government and other private and public donors from the United States and Europe.

The trust is expected to provide grants to local organizations -- including civic groups and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), local and regional governments, educational institutions and media, according to a news release by the German Marshall Fund. Grants will be awarded for civic-participation programs as well as projects that promote cross-border cooperation in the region.

"Approximately \$2 million in rolling grants will be given out each year," said the GMF, which will staff the trust. "Individual grants would range from \$1,000 to \$75,000 with an average size around \$15,000 or \$20,000, and will

be approved monthly by a grant-making committee that will include GMF representatives and one representative from each of the donors to the Trust.”

The German Marshall Fund is also in negotiations with the Romanian government to base the trust’s operations in Bucharest. The U.S. State Department recently signed agreements with Bulgaria and Romania to share military bases near the Black Sea coast.

The GMF, USAID, and the Mott Foundation previously joined forces in 2003 to create the Balkan Trust for Democracy, a \$30 million fund that has given out millions in grant money toward promoting regional cooperation and reconciliation, civil society development, and democracy-building ideas and institutions throughout the Balkans. The Balkan Trust for Democracy “has successfully grown and added new partners after its founding, a process the Black Sea Trust will emulate,” the GMF said.

In March, the German Marshall Fund co-sponsored a conference aimed at promoting cross-border cooperation, particularly in disaster response planning, and some of the same countries attended that were represented at the Black Sea Forum.

The U.S. Embassy in Bucharest has posted the full text of Crouch’s remarks on its Web site:
<http://bucharest.usembassy.gov>

The Southeastern Europe Cooperative Initiative (SECI) is a law enforcement consortium that allows authorities to share intelligence and coordinate activities in the pursuit of criminals across jurisdictional lines. Information on SECI’s work against human trafficking is available in a USINFO Electronic Journal article “European Alliance Combats Human Trafficking” and the Web site of the SECI Center in Bucharest:
<http://www.secicenter.org/>

Additional information is available on the Web site of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, to which the United States was recently granted observer status:
<http://www.bsec-organization.org/>

For information on U.S. policy in the region, see South-east Europe:
http://usinfo.state.gov/eur/europe_eurasia/balkans.html

UNITED STATES, EUROPEAN COMMISSION RENEW BIOTECH TASK FORCE

Consultative group scheduled to meet July 19-20 in Brussels, Belgium

Washington -- The United State and European Commission (EC) renewed a consultative task force on biotechnology research in an agreement signed June 8 by John Marburger, director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, and Janez Potocnik, commissioner for science and research for the European Commission.

Established in 1990, the task force fosters open communication between the EC and U.S. agencies that conduct biotechnology research.

The task force will meet July 19-20 in Brussels, Belgium. It will be co-chaired by Kathie Olsen, deputy director of the U.S. National Science Foundation and Christian Patemann, EC director of biotechnology, agriculture and food research.

“The renewal of this task force agreement ensures that we continue this successful partnership between Europe and the United States in biotechnology research,” said Marburger.

“I am pleased that this important trans-Atlantic dialogue and scientific cooperation will continue to yield important results to improve our collective efforts in the life sciences and biotechnology,” he said.

The task force has promoted research in the fields of neuroinformatics, nanobiotechnology, environmental biotechnology, applications of biotechnology to fuels and other products and synthetic genomics.

The collaborative group is one of several efforts falling under the U.S.-European Union Agreement for Scientific and Technological Cooperation. The EC is the European Union’s administrative arm.

For additional information, see Agricultural Biotechnology:
http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic_issues/biotechnology.html